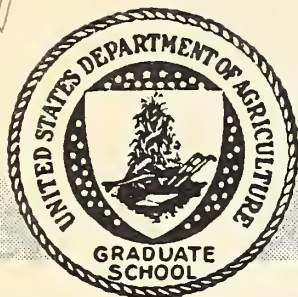


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Newsletter



GRADUATE SCHOOL ★ USDA

December 28, 1951

To the Faculty, Committee Members and
others associated with the Graduate School:

"Whereas's" have been relegated

to the limbo of "resolutions only" by the Virginia House of Delegates, so we noted in the news not long ago. This is one of several changes in the style of House bills and journal entries in the new style book adopted by the Assembly. Designed to promote readability, it offers suggestions for reducing reading time, achieving clarity, and actually speeding up legislation.

In another news story we see the Army is streamlining its intelligence reports along the lines of journalism. Modern newspaper style and news handling techniques have been substituted for the traditional much-criticized methods of reporting intelligence information. Instead of the verbose report outlining the capabilities and possible courses of action open to an enemy or potential enemy, intelligence officers are now supposed to give a flat forecast of what the enemy will do.

"We want clear, unslanted, factual writing," says Major General A. R. Bolling, assistant chief of staff for intelligence. "We like to eliminate the passive verbs. Newspaper style, with its short sentences, unequivocal statements, and simple words suits our needs. It lends itself both to speed of writing and speed of reading."

These stories illustrate a trend of the times, have special meaning for those of us who write annual reports -- and I suspect that includes 99 percent of you who read this newsletter. The number of annual reports written in Washington is staggering. The number read is by no means so impressive. And yet in most of them is a kernel of usefulness. In some more than that. But they tend to be obscure, their good points buried in a precedent-set format, the ideas expressed in officialese. GS puts much emphasis on righting this wrong through courses in writing. But I'm not sure we practice what we preach. This is by way of suggesting you look over our current annual report and educational statistics, recently processed. We'd like to have your comments.

With our writers

Oscar Krisen Buros, editor of STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REVIEW 1941-50, includes comprehensive reviews of three books by W. Edwards Deming: THE GAMMA AND BETA FUNCTIONS, a GS publication of 1944; STATISTICAL ADJUSTMENT OF DATA, published in 1944; and SOME THEORIES OF SAMPLING, 1950.

We recently granted the Japanese publishers, Iwanami Shoten, permission to translate and publish Walter A. Shewhart's STATISTICAL METHOD FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF QUALITY CONTROL, edited by Dr. Deming and published by GS in 1939.

Amy G. Cowing's article, "What People Read and Why" in the November issue of EXTENSION SERVICE REVIEW, contains some helpful pointers for all writers.

Marguerite Gilstrap wrote the article, "The Agriculture Graduate School Takes Stock of Its After-Hours Program" in the November issue of PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION.

If progressive societies are,

as Alfred North Whitehead avers, "those which most decisively have trusted themselves to the way of persuasion," the new book GS is publishing for Epsilon Sigma Phi marks another milestone in progress. Entitled, "Spirit and Philosophy of Extension Work as Recorded in Significant Papers," it brings together 150 papers and other information from leaders who have contributed to the great system of Extension education. R. K. Bliss, director emeritus of Iowa, has done an excellent job of screening Extension literature of the past half century, included many papers not published before. The 10 chapters cover: The New Education; Pioneers in Extension Work; Developing a National Extension Program; Organization and Administration; The Human Side - Better Living; A tribute of Leadership; Increasing Efficiency; Marks of Progress; Looking to the Future; Educational Philosophy. We have arranged with W. H. Cheesman, retired USDA editor, to edit the manuscript.

If you missed

a panel discussion, "Problems of Top Management in USDA," given before the Organization and Methods Conference in USDA in December 1948, you can read the transcript in the autumn (1951) issue of PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVIEW. Participants were Albert J. Loveland, then Under Secretary, P. V. Cardon, ARA, Lyle F. Watts, FS, and Claude R. Wickard, REA.

Recommended reading

for those of you interested in operations research, a new book from the Technology Press (MIT) by Philip M. Morse and George E. Kimball. The title is METHODS OF OPERATION RESEARCH. I found it fascinating.

There's a good explanation of the system of Old Age and Survivors Insurance and how it applies to Federal workers in the November issue of PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION.

Only in Washington,

someone once observed, is the rest of the United States known as "the field". All of us notice, on our sorties out of the District, the cloudy spectacles with which Washington looks at the rest of the country and vice versa.

In USDA we have a good opportunity to clear our specs, adjust our sights, and review common problems with people from the field at the biennial conferences on personnel management. Just back from the sessions in Chicago, I can report that the Fifth Biennial held up the standards of interest and achievement set by previous conferences in getting administrators and personnel people to review policy, exchange ideas on common problems.

Traditionally, the biennial conference uses working groups to tackle problems by major areas. Following three days of study each group presents its findings to the plenary session which after discussion, adopts the proposals or their revisions or rejects them. On certain issues -- such as the new performance appraisal plan -- discussions may be strenuous. In the final session, the director of USDA personnel announces the action that will be taken on each conference proposal.

It was my privilege to chair the work group on research. In presenting our case to the plenary session we commented on the fact that here was another case of the shoemakers' children without shoes. USDA, known the world over for scientific research, carries on almost no research in personnel administration, has no organized way of keeping up with new findings elsewhere. We argued that here is a fertile field. Among other things, we proposed a clearing house on research in personnel administration to be set up by the Civil Service Commission. It would be designed to keep all Federal agencies abreast of what is going on, prevent duplication. We also recommended establishment in the USDA Office of Personnel of a central project file on the subject similar to the file on agricultural research in ARA. The plenary session gave our report unanimous approval, but the hard work of implementing the recommendations is yet to come.

Planning for retirement?

Louise Sullivan represented GS at a luncheon arranged recently by the USDA Welfare Association to discuss what can be done to aid prospective retirees in planning a busy useful life after they leave their jobs in Government. "One of the biggest problems," said Eugene Merritt, now retired from Extension Service, "is finding 50 to 60 hours a week on your hands and not knowing what to do with them." He advises 3 or 4 interests so that if circumstances forces you to give up one of them you have others in their stead. One of Mr. Merritt's hobbies is safety devices for older people. He will exhibit some of these at the Golden Age Hobby Show. Another is finding older people who have resources which can be utilized by a community group. Recently he found a retired file clerk who was "rocking himself to death," put him to work straightening out a church's records.

GS courses, as Miss Sullivan pointed out, are appealing to many retirees who now have time to take up studies they had always wanted to pursue. Many of you have retirees in your classes. Perhaps you can supply us with some interesting stories on some of the things they are doing to enrich and enjoy life.

AMONG OURSELVES

New faculty members who will finish out the term for Harold Christie, now in Ecuador, are Gabrielle Forbush, former editor of the Woman's Home Companion, who will teach fiction writing, and Frances Fox, who will teach feature writing. Miss Fox, a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, is an information specialist with FHA. Mrs. Forbush is with Treasury.

Roy Burroughs, instructor in principles of economics, has transferred from BAE to Housing and Home Finance, where he is international housing advisor. Two Miami University graduates have been added to the Graduate School staff: Marjorie Jenkins, who replaces Mildred Morris, and Patria Runser. Mrs. Morris has transferred to the District of Columbia Health Service.

Elsa Jones, instructor in shorthand reporting, has transferred to the Army Air Force and will be stationed in Anchorage, Alaska.

We asked Myron F. Scheid (PMA) to act as GS official delegate to the Centennial celebration of Ripon College. Mr Scheid is field man in charge of standardization and inspection of processed fruits and vegetables at Ripon.

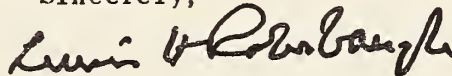
Our congratulations to Frederick V. Waugh, a member of the GS departmental committee on social sciences, who has recently been named assistant chief of BAE. He succeeds O. C. Stine and will be in charge of price, income, marketing and related service activities.

Marian Harlin, Ralph Rowland, and Katherine Wilkey, instructors in office techniques, attended the Institute Course on Shorthand, Typing, and Transcription arranged by the Training Officers Conference and conducted by Madeline S. Strong of Gregg Publications.

Virgil L. Couch, deputy assistant administrator for Civil Defense is a member of the Stockberger award committee of the Society of Personnel Administration. The committee will select the recipient to receive the award for an outstanding contribution to the advancement of personnel administration.

My most sincere wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,



Director

